

UNIFIED ARIZONA VETERANS – April 2, 2005
(Subject to Approval on May 7, 2005)

Call to Order

The regular meeting of Unified Arizona Veterans was called to order at 10:00 a.m. with proper ceremonies by Chairman Mary Ellen Piotrowski. The roll was revealed that all officers were present

Introductions: Mitzi Adams, DAV Auxiliary; Bernie Domsy, JWVA; and Kerry Featherston, Enduring Freedom Memorial were introduced.

Minutes/Treasurer's Report

The minutes of the March meeting were approved as printed per a motion by Bill Krause, seconded and carried. The treasurer's report was approved by a motion from Dick Collis, seconded and carried.

Correspondence: Letters from Chairman Piotrowski on behalf of UAV to Representative Trent Franks regarding the federal budget, and the Arizona House of Representatives and House Appropriations Committee regarding SB 1056 and SCR 1009 were read.

Sickness and Distress: Jesse Gersten, AVHOF Alumni has been hospitalized with back ailments.

Reports:

- Gary Fredricks reported that Steve Buyers has been quoted that the VA will have to "live within the '05-'06 budget" as set by the President. MOAA is supporting legislation to escalate funding for full concurrent receipt to 2005 from 2008 and to remove the SPB/DIC offset.
- In the absence of Director Chorpenning, Donna Adams reported:
 - SCR 1009 and SB 1056, both items regarding property tax exemption for disabled veterans were held by the House Appropriations Committee and will not move forward as introduced. A good number of members went down to the Appropriations hearing. Pat Chorpenning's excellent remarks pointing out the disparities in the bills were undoubtedly emphasized by the members signing in against the legislation.
 - Donna advised that communication with Jeff Schrade, Communications Director for the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee indicates that the Senate has come up with an alternative to the President's budget which eliminates the increased pharmacy co-pay, enrollment fee, and any loss of per diem for eligible veterans in state nursing homes. The Senate budget continues with cuts for construction. Mr. Schrade indicated that the House is working on similar measures. While it appears that budgetary issues are looking up, we must remain vigilant in our efforts to maintain funding for veterans' programs until the final budget is passed.
 - The Arizona State Veteran Home continues to be renovated inside. The Home is now 10 years old and must be continuously improved. A-107 is currently under renovation, Liberty Hall will be made over in May, and the resident rooms are being done as donated funding becomes available. The Jewish War Veterans have been extremely supportive in the resident room renovations.
- Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame – The Shrine Auditorium has offered a \$1500 reduction in the Auditorium rental, bringing the cost to \$750.00.
- Sandra Flint, Director Phoenix VARO, provided hard copy information regarding the Veterans Benefits Act of 2004.

Special Presentation: April Manchester presented handouts regarding volunteer opportunities for organizations for the Medal of Honor Convention next September. She advised that volunteers are needed to

transport people from the airport to the convention hotel on Sunday, Sept. 25th, and volunteers are needed to work the reception desk. T-shirts will be made for the volunteers; sizes will need to be provided.

Unfinished Business:

A motion was made by Donna Adams to accept the offer of the Shrine Auditorium rental fee of \$750.00 for the Hall of Fame, seconded and carried.

Al Rodrigues initiated discussion regarding the failure of UAV Representatives to adequately notify their Department and members of what happens at UAV. Chairman Piotrowski suggested that Al head a committee to present recommendation to fix this problem. Jim Murphy, Jim Katzenburger, and Lencho Othon will assist Al. Al will also meet with Pat Chorpenning for input.

New Business:

Jess Jasperson, DAV read a resolution that will be presented at the DAV State Convention in June. The resolution deals with limiting fees for veterans in nursing homes, but Jess was unable to give any specifics.

Webb Ellis reported that seven of the ADVS Advisory Commissioners had attended a National Assoc. of State Directors of Veterans Affairs meeting in Washington, D.C. There was information gathered on programs being conducted in other states and low programs that may be available. Also, the Director of the New Mexico DVA is very interested in the Veterans Hall of Fame program and the possibility of instituting one in NM.

Webb advised that the Commission will send a letter to the Governor asking for a task force be appointed to craft a veterans legislation omni-bill to be presented to the legislature.

There is presently some misunderstanding regarding the formation of the Bob Stump Veterans Museum and the origin of naming the museum after the late Representative. Webb advised that the name was determined by the City of Phoenix, not UAV, the Hall of Fame, or the ADVS Advisory Commission. Webb suggested that individual veterans' service organizations need to utilize UAV more to gather information or voice concerns rather than the Commission.

Kerry Fetherston presented a proposal to construct an Enduring Freedom Memorial at Wesley Bolin Plaza. The plans call for the cost to be in the neighborhood of \$300,000.00, and veterans organizations and individuals are encouraged to support this project. A miniature of the memorial is on display in the lobby of the Arizona State Veteran Home. For more information, contact Kerry at (602) 625-4487.

Following considerable discussion about the condition of the memorials at Wesley Bolin, Dick Collis made a motion for UAV to send a letter to the Department of Administration voicing our concerns, seconded and carried.

Good of the Order:

Donna Adams reported that the meeting will need to be moved in May since Liberty Hall at ASVH will be under renovation. An attempt will be made to secure space at the VAMC.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 with proper ceremonies to meet again on May 7th.

Donna Adams, Secretary